

**Improving Outcomes
for Children and
Young People in
Rathcoole and Monkstown**

A 2 Year Action Plan

Introduction

Aim of the Action Plan

S3 Solutions was commissioned by Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council (ANBC) in January 2016 to support the Stakeholder Group working to improve outcomes for children and young people in Rathcoole and Monkstown to develop a two year action plan for the period 1st April 2016 – 31st March 2018. The terms of reference outlined that the action plan was to be outcomes based and reflective of the Outcomes Based Accountability Approach (OBA). Resources to complete the assignment have been provided by ANBC and the Public Health Agency (PHA).

As required, this plan has been informed and shaped by the following:

- Feedback and input from Newtownabbey Family Connections, local schools, the local community and other stakeholders
- Analysis of current statistics and strategies relating to Educational Attainment in the Rathcoole and Monkstown area

The aim of this process is to produce an action plan that:

- Focusses on outcomes to be achieved to address educational underachievement in Rathcoole and Monkstown
- Provides a framework for planning and performance management

Context

Rathcoole and Monkstown are two urban estate areas based in the Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council area. Both areas are defined amongst the most deprived within Northern Ireland (NI) in relation to deprivation and disadvantage. As a result the areas experience a range of socio – economic and generational issues in relation to disadvantage. Rathcoole is identified as a Neighbourhood Renewal Area while Monkstown is recognised as an 'Area at Risk'. Educational underachievement is a significant issue and challenge within both areas as a result of a range of different factors including the levels of deprivation and disadvantage noted.

Since 2009 Barnardo's has delivered Newtownabbey Family Connections, an integrated model of work with children and families in clusters of local schools in Rathcoole to improve educational achievement. Initially a Steering Group was established from within the Rathcoole Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership Education Sub Group, with local principals and key community stakeholders represented. Since April 2015 this Steering Group has undertaken a series of meetings and engagements with community, voluntary, statutory agencies, politicians and local churches and has evolved into a Stakeholder Group to tackle educational underachievement. As a result of the merger of the two local secondary schools to create Abbey Community College, the geographical remit of the work of the Stakeholder Group was expanded to include both Rathcoole and Monkstown. The Stakeholder Group also engaged with local residents and worked closely with the Fair Chance Project Educational Impact Group, a group of local residents interested in improving education in the area.

It is in this context that the work of the Stakeholder Group has been progressed. Initial visioning sessions were completed in April 2015, November 2015 and January 2016 to identify priority areas to be addressed and potential initiatives that could be brought forward to tackle issues relating to educational underachievement in the area.

Representation on the Stakeholder Group is detailed below:

Statutory Representation	Political Representation	Schools
Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council Education Authority for Northern Ireland Public Health Agency Northern Health and Social Care Trust	Cllr Paul Hamill (DUP) Cllr Billy Webb (ALL)	Abbey Community College Rathcoole Primary School Abbots Cross Primary School Whitehouse Primary School Hollybank Primary School
Community Organisations and Service Providers		
Barnardo's Monkstown Boxing Club Monkstown Village Initiatives Newtownabbey Arts and Cultural Network Start 360 Surestart Action for Children Monkstown Village Centre Open University Monkstown Community Association Synergy Newtownabbey Methodist Mission Rathcoole Churches Community Group (The Dunanney Centre) Newtownabbey Women's Group		

Strategic Assessment

A strategic assessment was completed to support the development of the action plan, consisting of the following information:

Consultation Framework

The consultation framework for this action plan was developed in line with the terms of reference for the assignment and following initial meetings with Stakeholder Group representatives.

The consultation framework implemented in the development of the action plan sought to maximise input from local residents (parents and families), community organisations, statutory agencies, elected representatives and local schools in the area (Principal input from each school). Consultation activities, which took place in January and February 2016 comprised of the following:

- 1 x initial meeting with the Stakeholder Group
- Design and distribution of a community questionnaire – a total of 324 responses were received for the community questionnaire
- 27 x structured interviews with relevant stakeholders, including community organisations, elected representatives, council officers, statutory agency representatives and principals of local schools
- 3 x focus groups conducted with local parents

Desk Review

The consultation process was augmented by a desk review that included analysis of the strategic relevance of the work of the Stakeholder Group as well as a review of available and relevant statistics including:

Strategic Documents and Policies	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Education (DE) - "Learning to Learn": A Framework for Early Years Education and Learning • DE - Extended Schools Policy: "Schools, Families and Communities Working Together" • DE - "Count, Read: Succeed" A Strategy to Improve Outcomes in Literacy and Numeracy • DE - "Together towards Improvement" • DE - "Every School a Good School" A Policy for School Improvement" • DE - Priorities for Youth • Department of Employment and Learning (DEL) - "Further Education Means Success" NI Strategy for Further Education • DEL - "Access to Success" An Integrated Regional Strategy for Widening Participation in Higher Education • DEL - "Generating Our Success" The NI Strategy for Youth Training • DEL - "Pathways to Success" Preventing Exclusion and Promoting Participation of Young People • ANBC - Draft Community Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office of First and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) - "Lifetime Opportunities" Government's Anti Poverty and Social Inclusion Strategy for NI • OFMDFM - "Delivering Social Change" The Executive's Child Poverty Strategy • OFMDFM - "Delivering Social Change Through Affordable Childcare" A Ten Year Strategy for Affordable and Integrated Childcare 2015-2025 • OFMDFM - "Our Children and Young People: Our Pledge" A Ten Year Strategy for Children and Young People in NI • Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP) - NI Children and Young People's Plan • CYPSP Northern Outcomes Group Action Plan • Department of Health, Social Care and Public Safety (DHSSPS) - "Making Life Better" A Whole System Strategic Framework for Public Health • DSD - "People and Place" A Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal

Action Planning

S3 Solutions facilitated one strategic planning session with Stakeholder Group members in March 2016. The planning session focused on analysing consultation data, reviewing available information and using this to establish high level outcomes to work towards through the implementation of the action plan and delivery of programmes

Summary of Consultation Feedback

A brief summary of each stage of the consultation process has been provided below (please refer to full document for a more detailed breakdown):

Community Consultation

- The key issues impacting on educational achievement within Rathcoole and Monkstown were identified as 1) Lack of motivation / aspirations 2) Family / home life issues 3) Lack of positive role models 4) Need for greater support for parents
- 95.2% of respondents felt that the four priority theme areas of Raising Aspirations; Improving Attainment; Collaboration and Early Intervention are relevant and appropriate in order to address educational underachievement
- Of the current support available, 42.0% of respondents had participated in parent support programmes while 41% had participated in Adult Education. Of those that had participated only 38.7% felt that parenting programmes were beneficial while 21.8% felt that Adult Education was beneficial to them
- 25.5% of respondents felt that they didn't gain any benefits by participating in the support programmes / activities currently on offer.
- Of the benefits gained, improved self-confidence and self-esteem was most popular (46.1%) while a further 44.6% indicated that they felt better prepared to support their child/ren as a result of participation.
- 54.6% of respondents children / young people had participated in Breakfast Clubs which was the most popular programme identified for them
- 28.0% of respondents were not aware of or had participated in any of the support programmes / activities available to them
- For those that were aware of or had young people participating in activities / programmes, 31.7% felt that no benefits had been gained by children / young people. Breakfast Clubs and; Literacy and Numeracy Programmes were the most beneficial of those listed.
- Respondents highlighted that the greatest benefits for young people taking part in support programmes were improved confidence and self-esteem; and improved school performance

Stakeholder Consultation

- The key issues impacting on educational achievement as identified by stakeholders are:
 - Low level aspirations and generational underachievement of families in the local areas
 - Lack of engagement in and value placed on the education of children by parents (need to change perceptions and attitudes towards education)
 - A need to ensure that parents (particularly those most at risk) to access the relevant parent / family support programmes
- Stakeholder groups agreed that the 4 identified themes of Raising Aspirations; Improving Attainment; Early Intervention and Collaboration are all vitally important to address educational underachievement within Rathcoole and Monkstown
- Raising Aspirations and Early Intervention were identified as the 2 most important themes within the overall process across the 3 stakeholder groups
- A robust marketing and publicity campaign should be explored using as many different methods as possible to help raise awareness of the intent to address educational underachievement within Rathcoole and Monkstown
- Programmes and initiatives identified to impact on educational underachievement were varied in nature but the most prominent activities included dedicated breakfast / homework clubs (responsibility of schools and/or community organisations), parent / family support programmes, additional counselling provision within schools, community based initiatives delivered during school holiday, greater early intervention provision, programmes that engage parents and children together within a learning environment, more vocational type opportunities / qualifications in and out of school.

Parent focus group consultation

- The attitudes and commitment of parents is critical to the educational development and achievement of their children (current attitudes towards education are poor).
- Parents own lack of confidence and educational achievement is reflected by their children
- Parents need to be supported to effectively support their children's own education
- Parents would like to participate in more programmes / initiatives alongside their children where they can learn and work together
- Adult education programmes should be more accessible and readily available
- Delivery of vocational type classes for children within schools should be prioritised
- Issues such as bullying, mental health and low self-esteem have a negative impact on children's school experience (greater counselling provision within schools required)
- Schools should be accessible for community use during the evenings to deliver more initiatives / programmes
- School holiday schemes delivered by community based organisations would help to keep young people involved in positive activities
- Improved links between schools and sports clubs / community groups to refer children to

Strategic Priorities and Outcomes

Priorities and outcomes were developed through a facilitated process, with the Stakeholder Group identifying priorities as a result of ongoing meetings over a period of 18 months and outcomes under each priority then agreed post the community and stakeholder consultation process which included feedback from local people and organisations reflective of the local community.

The strategic priorities and outcomes agreed by the Stakeholder Group inform the key focus for action over the lifetime of the plan and beyond, with resources and programmes prioritised based upon their ability to impact upon the priorities and outcomes.

Strategic Priority	Outcomes to be Achieved
Raising Aspirations	Schools are accessible, valued and safe places for children and parents
	Parents have greater understanding of the value of education to their child and are more engaged in their child's education
	Children and young people have higher levels of belief regarding what they can achieve and how they can achieve their potential

Strategic Priority	Outcomes to be Achieved
Attainment	Children and young people are supported to reach their learning potential at all stages of their education
	Parents recognise the contribution of learning to health, well being and personal attainment and feel they have increased access to learning opportunities
	Improved attendance levels and engagement of children and parents within education

Strategic Priority	Outcomes to be Achieved
Collaboration	Enhanced levels of buy in and focus from all key stakeholders to create a culture of sharing resources and expertise
	Increased level of engagement between communities, schools and other stakeholders
	Increased and enhanced communication between nursery, primary and secondary schools to improve transition process and experience for children and young people

Strategic Priority	Outcomes to be Achieved
Early Intervention	Ensuring that all children in preschool / nursery are fully prepared for school life
	Improved access to services for vulnerable children and young people to enable intervention at an early age or stage
	Improving resilience and emotional wellbeing of parents, children and teachers

Action Plan

Following the identification of priorities, outcomes and agreement on key areas of action to be brought forward by the Stakeholder Group, this section of the plan details a series of practical actions to be taken forward over the next two years. Actions detailed cover areas such as securing investment, communication (with community and stakeholders), impact measurement, programme design, policy development and audit of current provision.

Securing resources to support the delivery of the action plan

Tasks	Target Date	Lead
Complete initial engagement with Big Lottery Fund People and Communities Programme	End of April 2016	Barnardo's along with Task Group Reps and local early years providers
Complete full application to Big Lottery People and Communities Programme to support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co ordination of Stakeholder Group • Resourcing and delivery of communication strategy • Delivery of parent / family support programmes • Delivery of parent / child development programmes • Easter / summer programmes 	End of June 2016	
Complete initial proposal to Big Lottery Empowering Young People programme	January 2017	Stakeholder Group to agree lead partner for application
Complete application to Big Lottery Empowering Young People Programme to support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth work based programmes to work with young people / adults aged 11 – 25 • Easter / summer programmes 	June 2017	
Undertake meeting with senior officials from the Education Authority and Department of Education to present action plan and seek resources for delivery	End of June 2016	Task Group
Undertake meeting with All Party NI Assembly Group established to tackle educational underachievement	End of June 2016	Task Group
Engage in Peace IV programme consultation activities to provide input relevant to the area and identify any available investment opportunities	April to Sep 2016	Task Group

Development of a comprehensive communication strategy

Tasks	Target Date	Lead
Official community launch of the Action Plan to Improve Outcomes for Children and Young People	October 2016	Task Group
Development of a key slogan and branding for the Stakeholder Group		
<p>Establishment of social media platforms for the Stakeholder Group</p> <p>Creation of a website for the Stakeholder Group to include areas for sharing resources / information between stakeholders</p> <p>Identification of role models to support the delivery Stakeholder Group initiatives and reinforce campaign messages</p> <p>Development of a calendar of key community engagement events to be delivered to include the date, location and type of event to be held</p>		

Parent and family support programme delivery

Tasks	Target Date	Lead
<p>Design of parenting and family support programmes to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilities required / available • Key dates / timescale • Number of parents / families to be engaged • Programme detail and approach • Links to other programmes or networks 	<p>Initial info to support Big Lottery app by end of June 2016</p> <p>Additional work post funding being secured</p>	<p>Barnardo's / Task Group</p> <p>Support from: Local Primary Schools, Nurseries, Early Years Providers</p>
<p>Design of parent / child development programmes to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilities required / available • Key dates / timescale • Number of parents / families to be engaged • Programme detail and approach • Links to other programmes or networks 		

Connected Schools programme delivery

Tasks	Target Date	Lead
Design of questionnaire / survey for local pupils to support an audit of extended schools provision	Ongoing over the course of the 2 year period based on available resources	Stakeholder Group to lead and identify key roles / partners as appropriate
Distribution of questionnaire / survey for local pupils to support an audit of extended schools provision		
Design of consistent homework club format to be brought forward for the area based upon need and gaps in provision		
Confirmation of literacy and numeracy programme support as per the previous Delivering Social Change funded initiative		
Design of Easter and Summer pupil support programmes to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilities required / available • Key dates • Number of parents / families to be engaged • Programme detail and approach 		
Delivery of social and emotional learning programmes in schools and delivery of early intervention programmes in pre-school and Foundation stage		

Consistent policy development / communication protocols across all schools

Tasks	Target Date	Lead
Development and agreement of a "Managing Attendance Policy"	Ongoing with milestones to be agreed by Schools Sub Group at initial meeting	Schools Sub Group
Development and agreement of a consistent approach to recognise and celebrate good attendance levels		
Creation of a specific information sharing platform to support the exchange of relevant information to enhance the transition process and target any areas of concern / gaps in provision within the area		
Development of a consistent and standard transition protocol to be taken forward by all relevant nursery, primary and secondary schools		
Development of a consistent approach / policy towards the provision of community activities and events within school facilities		
Develop and agree a protocol and framework for information sharing between schools to support the work of the Stakeholder Group and impact measurement		
Agree commitment to measuring impact and data sharing e.g. PTE/PTMs, CAT4, Pupil Attitude to School survey		
Develop a structure diagram-showing links to CYPSP, Newtownabbey Learning Community, Neighbourhood Renewal/Areas of Risk		

Young person and adult education programme delivery

Tasks	Target Date	Lead
<p>Review of current careers advice services and delivery</p> <p>Design of enhanced careers advice services to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme detail and approach • Key partners and available resources in the area to support service provision 	Ongoing with milestones to be agreed by Schools Sub Group at initial meeting	Schools Sub Group
<p>Identification of available resources for vocational training and employability programmes in the area and design:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School and provider engagement activities • Signposting / referral mechanisms 	Ongoing over the course of the 2 year period based on available resources	Stakeholder Group to lead and identify key roles / partners as appropriate
<p>Design of youth work based approach to engage and work with young people aged 11 plus, taking into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current funded initiatives in the area • Learning from programmes such as Monkstown Boxing Club • Needs analysis exercises to target specific young person needs 		
Design and complete adult / parent needs analysis exercise to identify key educational interests and needs	Sep – Dec 2016 (to inform proposal to Big Lottery)	Task Group to identify lead partner to take forward
<p>Design of adult education programme in liaison with local community organisations to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilities required / available • Key dates • Number of parents / families to be engaged • Programme detail and approach • Relevant training providers / facilitators 	Sep – Dec 2016	Task Group to identify lead partner to take forward

Audit of current provision and assets

Tasks	Target Date	Lead
Undertake review of / map current available revenue resources and service provision in the Rathcoole and Monkstown area to support the work of the Stakeholder Group	By April 2017	Task Group
Undertake review / map school and community physical assets in Rathcoole and Monkstown to support the work of the Stakeholder Group		

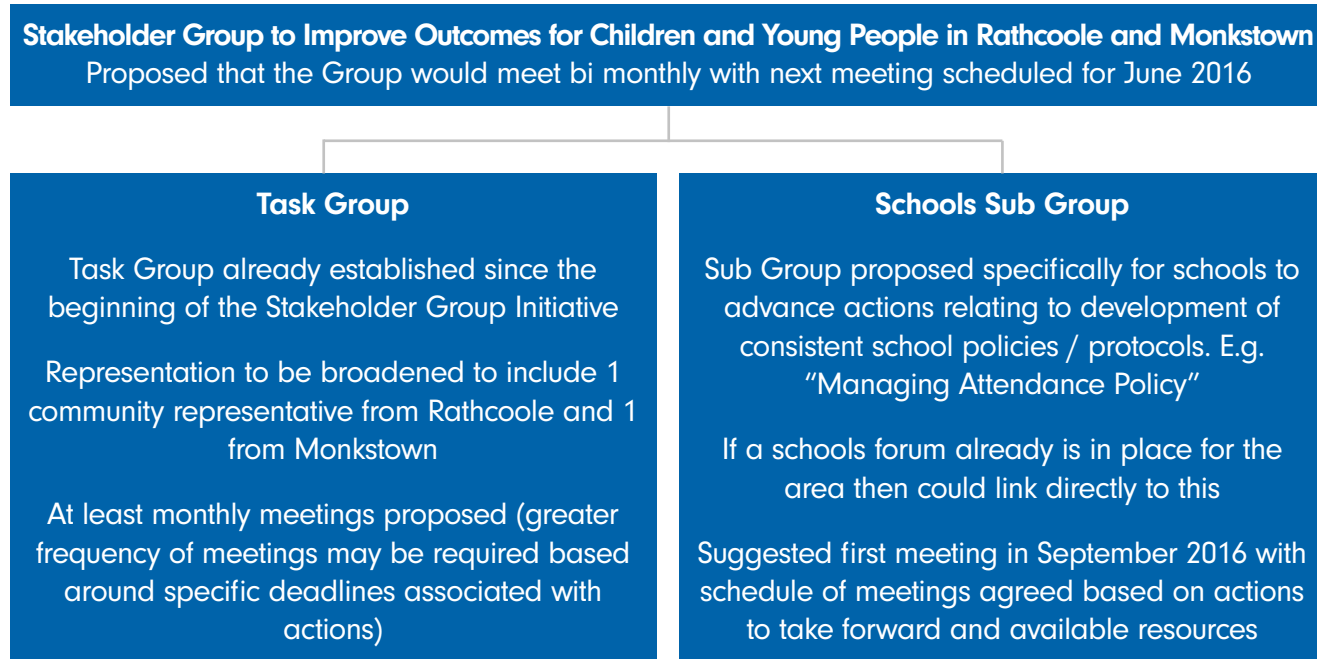
Monitoring and Evaluation

Tasks	Target Date	Lead
Agree a consistent monitoring and evaluation framework to measure impact of initiatives delivered through the Stakeholder Group	Dec 2016 in line with funding being secured	Task Group
Pilot an innovative tracking system for a cohort of pupils over the course of a 3-5 year programme moving from primary to secondary education, to include the use of video diaries and other technology to track the experience of individuals	Post funding being secured (this will be costed within proposals)	Task Group

Resourcing the Plan

Stakeholder Group Structure

Moving forward, the following structure will be implemented for the Stakeholder Group:



Funding and Resource Requirements

Short Term Resource Requirements

Between April and June 2016 there is a requirement to secure financial resources to procure support to help bring forward the application to Big Lottery People and Communities programme - working alongside Barnardo's as Lead Partner

Between April and October 2016 there is a requirement to secure £5,000 to support the design and delivery of the Communications Strategy actions detailed within Section 5 of the Action Plan

Long Term Funding Opportunities

Big Lottery Fund People and Communities Programme - up to £500,000 for 3-5 year projects tackling specific need identified within a community / communities

Big Lottery Fund Empowering Young People Programme - up to £600,000 for 3-5 year projects tackling specific needs relating to 11-25 experiencing barriers to learning / employment

Peace IV - specific programme strands relating to Children and Young People. Further details to be released in the period April to September 2016

Summary and Next Steps

This action plan has been developed by stakeholders involved to improve outcomes for children and young people in Rathcoole and Monkstown and to address educational underachievement within these communities. The action plan is the result of an extensive engagement process with local community, political, youth provider, schools and statutory agency representatives along with broad input from the local community through consultation exercises.

This summary document clearly articulates:

- The rationale and community context for a multi agency and stakeholder approach to address educational underachievement in the area
- The needs and priorities relating to education identified by local residents and key stakeholders working in the area
- Outcomes and positive impacts that stakeholders collectively would like to realise for children, young people and families within the Rathcoole and Monkstown areas
- Practical actions to be delivered in order to progress initiatives and programmes that can deliver a positive impact
- The structure and resources required to deliver the action plan over a 2 year period along with clear timescale for delivery and performance management

The next steps in the process relate directly to the actions outlined within the Action Plan section of the document. In the first 6 – 12 months of the action plan, securing resources is a priority for the Stakeholder Group and all available avenue of investment are to be explored to resource the programmes of work identified based on local community needs.

